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ABSTRACT

Program directors, teachers, and counselors of Adult Basic Education (ABE) and General Educational Development (GED) programs were surveyed about their attitudes toward and knowledge of their students with learning disabilities (LD), the availability of services for those students, the availability of staff development activities about LD, and their desire for additional staff development and support services. Respondents included 205 teachers, 64 program directors, and 37 counselors. Many of the respondents defined LD in a manner consistent with federal legislation. Others defined LD as any unexplained learning problem. Attitudes toward LD students were generally positive, but there was less agreement on the extent to which programs should accommodate such students. Knowledge about characteristics of LD students was greater than knowledge of their legal protection from discriminatory educational practices. Teachers wanted more information on where to refer students for assessment, and counselors wanted to know where to refer students for help. Relevant inservice training, assessment of students, and LD specialists were available to fewer than one-third of the respondents. More than two-thirds of the respondents wanted inservice training on characteristics of LD students and appropriate teaching methods, and more than half desired more LD assessment, consultation with LD specialists, and appropriate teaching materials. (The document contains a model for a multilevel service delivery plan, a copy of the questionnaire, and respondent comments.) (CML)

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INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF ADULT LITERACY

ABE and GED Staff Perceptions Regarding Learning Disabled Students

A Final Report
of the 310 Special Project 88-98-8034

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Abstract

ABE and GED staff employed as program directors, teachers, and counselors were surveyed to determine their attitudes and knowledge about learning disabilities in the ABE/GED student population, the availability of staff development activities and support services related to LD students, and the desire for additional staff development and support services. A total of 306 individuals responded to a mailed questionnaire, including 205 who acted primarily as teachers, 64 program directors, and 37 counselors.

Many of the respondents defined learning disabilities in a manner consistent with federal and state definitions, but respondents as a group also gave many definitions indicating a more generic concept of learning disabilities as any unexplained learning problem. Staff attitudes toward LD students were generally positive although there was less agreement on the extent to which accommodations should be made for LD students in ABE/GED programs. Knowledge about characteristics of LD students was greater than knowledge regarding legal protection of LD individuals from discriminatory educational practices. More information was desired by teachers regarding where to send students for assessment, while counselors were less sure of where to send LD students for specialized help.

Referrals to other agencies were the most available form of support along with printed resource materials on learning disabilities; more direct support such as in-service training, assessment of students, and LD specialists to work with teachers or students were reported by less than one-third of respondents. More than two-thirds of the respondents wanted in-service training on characteristics of LD students and appropriate teaching methods, and more than half desired additional availability of LD assessment, consultation with LD specialists, appropriate teaching materials, and LD specialists to work with students.

The results from this project clearly indicate a need for additional staff development programs and support services. A model is suggested here for a multi-level service delivery plan. Recommendations for research are also made.

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Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Efforts to locate learning disabled (LD) adults through adult basic education programs as part of a recently conducted 310 project revealed the difficulty of identifying formally diagnosed LD adults through this network. This was a somewhat surprising finding given the frequent informal indications that ABE teachers perceive there to be many adults with learning disabilities in their programs. In fact, we know relatively little about the actual incidence of learning disabilities among participants in ABE/GED programs. Travis (1979) has suggested the incidence in ABE classes may be as high as 80%. This is in sharp contrast to the service level to LD children within the public schools. Only 4.62% of children received special education services for the learning disabled during 1984 (Tugend, 1985). It is reasonable to assume that the incidence of learning disabilities will be higher among those attending adult basic education classes than among the general population, since by definition adults in ABE classes meet at least one criterion found in all definitions of learning disabilities -- that of low academic achievement. Not all adults who exhibit low achievement levels, however, have specific learning disabilities. While no standard definition for learning disabilities in adults has been accepted, the definition accepted at a federal level for identifying children with learning disabilities emphasizes the absence of other conditions which might cause the learning deficit, including limited intellectual ability. The definition also emphasizes the presence of information processing problems. It reads:

> The term "children with specific learning disabilities" means those children who have a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using language, spoken or written,which disorder may manifest itself in imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or do mathematical calculations. Such disorders include such conditions as perceptual handicap, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. Such a term does not include children who have learning programs which are primarily the result of visual, hearing or motor handicaps, mental retardation, or economic disadvantages. (Federal Register, 1977)

If we are to move toward more effective provision of services to adults with learning disabilities, estimates of the number of ABE participants either known or suspected to have learning disabilities are important. Accurate estimates, appropriate identification, and effective interventions depend upon ABE/GED staff awareness of the nature of learning disabilities in adults. No existing literature was located reporting knowledge and attitudes of ABE/GED staff members regarding learning disabilities or their desires for future education in this area. A limited amount of research has been reported regarding the training needs of other professionals responsible for education or training of LD adults. Eighty-six percent of respondents in a national survey by the ACLD Advocacy committee (Rechtman, 1985) reported the need for properly informed and trained vocational rehabilitiation counselors. In a study of public rehabilitation services for individuals with learning disabilities, Miller, Mulkey, and Kopp (1984) surveyed 163 VR counselors. They frequently mentioned a discomfort with their own expertise in providing services to LD Clients and expressed the need for training in characteristics of learning disabilities and diagnostic assessment.

Similarly, Shaw and Norlander (1986) suggested that in-service training was needed for college and university faculties working with LD students. This was supported by the findings of Askamit, Morris, and Luenberger (1987) that although college faculty and staff had fairly positive attitudes toward LD students, their knowledge about learning disabilities was less impressive.

Objectives

Given the evidence from the fields of vocational rehabilitation and higher education and the National Joint Committee's position (1985) that programs must be developed to provide professionals information about the problems and needs of LD adults, an exploratory study was designed to examine the knowledge, attitudes, and needs of ABE and GED staff regarding adult students with learning disabilities. The project was intended to accomplish three goals: (a) to obtain estimates of the number of LD adults in

Pennsylvania Act 306 programs based on perceptions of ABE/GED staff, (b) to determine the level of awareness of those staff members regarding the nature of LD as manifest during adulthood, and (c) to assess the desire of Act 306 staff for specific types of staff development activities related to learning disabled adults. Specifically, the objectives of this project were to:

1. Determine areas of professional preparation and extent of training with regard to learning disabilities for ABE/GED program teachers and counselors.
2. Determine the working definitions of learning disability identified by Act 306 program staff.
3. Determine perceived levels of knowledge regarding characteristics and needs of LD students for ABE/GED program directors, teachers, and counselors.
4. Determine perceptions of capabilities of learning disabled adults.
5. Determine the number of students in ABE/GED programs known or suspected to have learning disabilities according to (a) teachers, (b) counselors, and (c) program administrators.
6. Identify methods and criteria currently used to identify LD students in Act 306 ABE/GED programs.
7. Determine most prevalent program practices with regard to individualized instruction and involvement of adult students in selection of learning objectives and activities.
8. Determine awareness (by role) of existing staff development resources and resources for the provision of specialized services related to adults for ABE/GED program directors, teachers, and counselors, including:
   a) assessment of students suspected to have learning disabilities;
   b) specialized direct intervention;

c) consultation to teachers;

d) inservice programs and materials; and

e) cooperative linkages with vocational rehabilitation and other agencies providing services for learning disabled adults.

9. Determine staff interest (by role) in the development of staff development and other supportive resources related to meeting the needs of learning disabled adults. (including services noted in number eight)

Procedures

Questionnaire Instrument. The questionnaire utilized in this project was designed for the current investigation. A number of questions were utilized or adapted from a questionnaire originally designed by Dorothy Tiede (Whitewater, Wisconsin) to assess faculty for administration to college faculty to determine their attitudes and perceived knowledge regarding learning disabled students . Those items adopted without change were deemed to be appropriate for staff at any educational level. Other items clearly had to be adapted to ABE/GED context. Additional items were created to determine: 1) previous training of staff members related to learning disabilities, 2) ABE/GED program resources related to assessment and intervention with LD students , 3) staff development resources and needs, 4) estimates of numbers of learning disabled students, 5) existing practices with regard to assessment of learning disabled students, 6) patterns of instruction (extent of individualization), and 7) involvement of adult ABE/GED students in goal setting. The questionnaire was designed to include certain questions aimed at all participants, with certain other questions specific to the primary role performed by the participant (administrator, teacher or counselor). The instrument was reviewed by several people with expertise in learning disabilities and revised accordingly, but was not otherwise piloted. A copy of the questionnairre appears in Appendix A.

Data Collection. During phase one, Program Directors of Act 306 programs in the State of Pennsylvania were contacted by mail to enlist their participation and support in carrying out the project. The letter explained the project and asked their willingness to participate (See Appendix B-1) . The names and addresses of teachers and counselors in their programs were requested if program directors were willing to share these. A form (see Appendix B-2) was enclosed so that program directors could specify the number of questionnaires needed for counselors and teachers if they elected to distribute the questionnaire rather than provide the project team with the names of their staff. Seventy-two administrators agreed to participate. Of these, 42 chose to distribute questionnaires. Thus 338 of the 505 questionnaires were distributed by administrators to their staff.

During phase two, questionnaires were mailed to program directors, teachers and counselors , either directly or through their program administrator. Business reply envelopes were provided to permit individual teachers and counselors to return their questionnaires directly to Penn State regardless of whether they received the questionnaire through direct mail or through their program director. An accompanying letter of explanation was provided with each questionnaire (See Appendix B-3). All questionnaires were coded with an ID number. Program directors were also mailed a special letter (Appendix B-4) and a tracking sheet to permit them to record the ID numbers given to individual staff members (See Appendix B-5) This tracking sheet was inadvertently omitted from the distribution packets mailed to the administrators, but was mailed with a letter explaining the omission within two days of the initial mailing. (See Appendix B-6) A reply within three weeks was requested from all, regardless of method of distribution.

After four weeks a follow-up letter (See Appendix B-7) was mailed with a second copy of the questionnaire to those who had not yet responded. Program directors who had elected to distribute questionnaires themselves were mailed a follow-up letter (Appendix B-8) along with the necessary number of ID coded questionnaires to enable them to distribute second copies only to those who had not yet returned the questionnaire. No further

reminders were sent after the first follow-up, partially because of the complexity of mailing through the program administrators. An adequate return rate was reached utilizing these procedures

Data analysis. For the purposes of quantitative analysis respondents were classified according to the role indicated in item number one to be their primary role. Approximately one-third of the respondents reported multiple staff roles. In such cases, the role ranked number one was assigned to the respondent for quantitative analysis of items. This meant some data were ignored if reported in items 32 -- 53 under a role not designated as primary. All general comments were recorded regardless of whether they were reported on the page assigned for the respondents' primary role.

Quantitative analysis utilizing the Systat program for the Macintosh computer was completed for those items requiring a fixed choice response. The level of analysis depended upon the item, with many nominal level items permitting only the use of frequency and percentage distribution tables. Tests of significance were calculated only for questionnaire items 7--31 which allowed ordinal measurement, using Kruskal-Wallis One-Way Analysis of Variance. This analysis permits some statements about significant differences among the groups of staff members (administrators, teachers, and counselors) with regard to perceptions about adult learning disabilities, based on differences in group medians. Tests of statistical significance were not utilized to determine whether differences existed among the groups with regard to awareness and perceived need for staff development, service provisions, and resources because small cell sizes violated the assumptions for the otherwise appropriate tests of significance. Essentially then, the quantitative analysis has been restricted to a descriptive level for most items.

A number of items also yielded qualitative data. Respondent-generated definitions of learning disabilities and responses to open-ended items were all sorted by item and by staff role to permit content analysis. Frequency counts were applied to categories generated from the data when appropriate. All comments were also recorded, and are presented in Appendix C of this report.

Project Staff

Dr. Jovita M. Ross, Assistant Professor in the Adult Education Program at Penn State University acted as project director. In addition to her doctorate in adult education Dr. Ross holds a master's degree in the field of learning disabilities and has experience teaching learning disabled adults and children. She has conducted one previous 310 project on this topic, titled "Learning and Coping Strategies Used by Learning Disabled Students Participating in Adult Basic Education and Literacy Programs" (1987). Dr. Ross also has given numerous presentations on the topic of the learning disabled adult, and has conducted workshops for adult basic education teachers and college faculty. She is also acting as project director for a demonstration project to train learning disabled adults in a vocational-technical school setting; that project was funded by the U. S. Office of Education, Postsecondary Programs for the Handicapped and was just beginning at the time this report was written.

Judith Smith, a doctoral candidate in Special Education served as project assistant, assisting in the conceptualization of the study, data collection and data analysis. She has taught GED classes and was Coordinator of Adult Education Programs in Tioga County Pennsylvania from 1984-1986. During this time she was author and administrator of 310, 306, and JTPA grants. The 310 Grant, Project PRIDE, provided volunteer tutors to adult students in five classroom sites, as well as in homes, a hospital psychiatric unit, and at a country jail. Ms. Smith has conducted workshops for college staff and faculty on the topic of college students with learning disabilities and is presently an academic clinician for LD college students at Penn State.

Time Frame of Project

The project was conducted in the spring of 1988. Phase one letters eliciting the support of program directors were mailed in early February. The first mailing of questionnaires, both via direct mail and through program directors, was initiated in late February. A few programs received an initial letter in early March, following the late receipt of the agreement to participate from their program directors. A followup mailing was conducted in late March, mailing either directly to administrators, teachers and counselor whose names and addresses were available , or mailing to the program directors who had agreed to assist with follow-up. Responses were received and analyzed beginning in March and continuing though May when a final cutoff date was established for processing of questionnaires. Qualitative analysis of open-ended comments and definitions continued through early-June when a preliminary version of this report was first drafted. This schedule coincides closely with the originally planned schedule for the project. There were no major delays in the progress of the project.

Intended Audience

The results of the project should provide information valuable for planning services to better address the needs of learning disabled adults in ABE/GED programs. Both the Pennsylvania Department of Education and smaller units within the state should find the report useful in planning services and staff development activities. The methodology limits the generalizability of conclusions to all ABE/GED programs in the state of Pennsylvania, given unresolved questions about the degree to which the sample fully represents the population of paid ABE/GED staff in this state. The results, however, should suggest implications for training of comparable staff groups, and should trigger further investigation in other regions.

Coordination and Dissemination

The final report of this project is available through the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The report will also be available on loan through ADVANCE, as are all reports of 310 projects conducted in the state.

Findings

The respondents are described, along with overall patterns of response and patterns exhibited by particular staff groups. Where possible, teachers, administrators and counselors are compared.

Description of Respondents

A total of 306 paid staff members returned useable questionnaires, reflecting a 62% return rate. Among the respondents 205 acted primarily as teachers, 64 were administrators and 37 were counselors. Approximately one-third of the respondents reported serving in more than one role, although for the purposes of this study they were classified according to primary role. The response group included 150 women and 153 men, with no significant difference in the number of men and women serving in the various roles, although male administrators outnumbered women (36 to 27), male counselors outnumbered women (23 to 14) and women outnumbered men as teachers (109 to 94). More administrators and counselors reported holding a master's degree (67.74% and 62.86% respectively) than did teachers (44.44%), with the bachelor's degree the highest educational attainment for most teachers (52.02%).

The majority (73.40%) of teachers indicated they taught in a specific content area. For the 160 teachers indicating a positive or negative response to each subject area, reading was the most frequently reported area (60.00%), followed by math (56.88%) and writing skills (56.25%). A significant minority of teachers reported teaching social studies (34.38%) and science (31.87%). These data indicate that while most teachers do specialize in certain subject areas, a number of them teach in more than one of the basic skill areas. Of the 192 teachers indicating the levels at which they taught, 68.75% taught at grade levels 5-8, 51.04% taught at levels 9-12, and 41.66% taught at levels 0-4. These data suggest a number of teachers work with students at more than one of the broad grade level ranges. The number of years of teaching experience in areas other than adult education ranged from 0 to 40 years with a mean of 11.7 and a standard deviation of 9.8 years. Ninety-two percent of the teachers held a current teaching certificate. Their teaching backgrounds are quite variable, with elementary education experience most common (26.56%), closely

followed by secondary experience (23. 44%). Seventeen percent of the teachers reported experience in one or more areas of special education; 4% specifically indicated they had experience as a teacher of learning disabled students. Table 1 shows the areas of teaching experience reported. It should be noted that because of the open-ended nature of the questionnaire item, some teachers indicated a level of teaching experience (elementary or secondary) while others reported a content area (e.g. science or math).

Table 1

Teaching Experience in Fields other than Adult Education

Content Area or Level	Frequency n=175	%
Elementary Education	51	29.14
Secondary Education	45	25.71
Special Education	30	17.14
English	28	16.00
Mathematics	20	11.43
Reading	18	10.29
Other (including Vocational, Business, Library Science, Alternative Ed. and others)	16	9.14
Science	13	7.43
Social Studies	11	6.29
College	7	4.00
Foreign Language	6	3.42
Early Childhood	4	2.29

Note: The total is higher than 100% because some individuals indicated both (a) content area(s) and level(s).

Previous Education about Learning Disabilities

Respondents were asked to indicate which of several methods had permitted them to acquire knowledge about learning disabilities. A clear majority of all the staff members identified workshops (67.54%) and professional journals (67.43%) as a source of such information. Just over one-half (51.65%) had acquired information about learning disabilities through coursework. Just less than one-half (49.51%) had acquired information about learning disabilities through the media (television, radio, magazines and newspapers). A little more than one-third acquired information about learning disabilities as a result of personal experience with a family member, friend, or neighbor (36.07%). Twenty-eight percent of the respondents indicated other means of having acquired information about learning disabilities, primarily describing various roles or settings through which they learned from experience. Table 2 reveals the percentage of individuals within each staff category who reported each source of information.

Table 2

Sources of Information Acquisition Regarding Learning Disabilities

	Percentage by Staff Role		
Source of Information	Administrators	Teachers	Counselors
Workshops	73.02	64.88	72.97
Professional Journals	81.25	60.78	80.56
Coursework	51.56	50.98	51.56
Media	54.69	49.51	49.51
Life Experience	35.94	37.07	30.56
Other	28.13	27.80	33.33

Definitions of Learning Disability

Staff members participating in the study were asked to respond to the question, "How would you personally define learning disabilities?" While some left the item blank and a few others declined to give a definition because of the lack of clarity they saw surrounding the term, most gave a definition varying from a few words to several lines in length. These definitions were later compiled by role and analyzed for distinctive elements emerging from the data. One or more key elements of the federal definition of learning disabilities were present in many definitions. These include: average or better ability; a discrepancy between ability level and achievement; discussion of difficulties in information processing; and exclusion of other primary causes of the learning problem including mental retardation, emotional disturbance and environmental lack of opportunity for learning. A study by the National Task Force on Identification (Chalfant, 1985) reported that, in fact, only 22 states used an unaltered version of the federal definition, with an additional 14 states using a modified version. One state supplemented the federal definition with one proposed by the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities in 1981 (Hammill, Leigh, Mc Nutt and Larsen, 1981). Eleven states wrote their own definition. State definitions were found to typically include two to five of the following five components: (a) academic failure component, (b) psychological process component, (c) exclusionary component, (d) etiological component, and (e) significant discrepancy component. The etiological component and the academic failure component were other elements that surfaced in the definitions of respondents. In addition to the previously documented components of definitions of learning disabilities used by states to classify learning disabled students, participants in this study also generated definitions which focused on (a) the presence of unspecified physical and/or mental problems, (b) inability to learn through "normal" methods", (c) generic learning problems resulting from unknown or any of a list of causes, or (d) a list of "symptoms". Table 3 shows the prevalence (ranked by frequency count) of designated elements among the definitions given by respondents.

Table 3

Respondent Generated Definitions of LD

Elements of Definitions	Total Group	Administrators	Teachers	Counselors
*Information Processing	67	13	47	7
Not Learning thru "Normal" methods	59	12	43	4
Generic Learning Problem	50	13	29	8
*Average Ability	47	11	28	8
*Achievement Discrepancy	41	9	18	10
Physical or Mental Problem	39	32	4	3
*Etiology	24	9	12	3
*Academic Failure	22	4	15	3
Characteristics- Inappropriate	7	3	4	0
Non-physical Condition	7	6	1	0
Characteristics- Appropriate	6	1	5	0
*Exclusion (other handicaps)	4	0	4	0
Not observable	4	2	2	0
Dysfunction	4	0	4	0

Note: Elements marked by a (*) coincide with components included in federal and state definitions.

These data indicate that the criteria used to define learning disabilities by ABE/GED staff are only moderately consistent with components of accepted federal and state definitions. Of the five elements appearing most frequently in ABE/GED staff definitions, three (information processing problems, normal ability level, and ability-achievement discrepancy) are among those standardly used in classifying students as learning disabled.

Two of the criteria used most frequently in definitions written by ABE/GED staff were reasonably generic -- not learning through traditional or normal methods and demonstration of a learning problem attributed to any of a number of sources. It is impossible to speculate as to what is meant by "normal" methods through which these adults are not learning. This criterion could be problematic if indeed the instructor is using a limited range of techniques for teaching which fail to match the learning styles of some students. The generic use of the term "learning disability" to denote any type of learning problem can also lead to potential misidentification. These criteria, if applied liberally in "identifying" students suspected of having learning disabilities may lead to inappropriate labeling of students as learning disabled who may be experiencing learning difficulties for a variety of reasons.

Estimates of the Number of Learning Disabled Students

Several items on the questionnaire were directed specifically to teachers and counselors to determine the estimated number of students with learning disabilities enrolled in the ABE/GED programs surveyed. Interpretation of the responses to these items, however, did not lead to clear estimates of the size of this population, in part because of imprecision in the way the question was posed. Teachers were first asked: "Do you have students in your program who are suspected of having a learning disability, but have not been formally diagnosed as learning disabled?" One-hundred forty three teachers (71% of those responding to the item) responded yes. Teachers were then asked to indicate how many such students were enrolled in their programs. For 134 teachers (64% of the total) offering an estimated number, the estimates ranged from 1 to 20, with a mean of 3.88 and a standard deviation of 3.93. When asked to estimate the total number of learning disabled students enrolled (identified and unidentified), 178 teachers (86% of total) responded, reporting from 0 to 45 cases, with a mean of 6.16 and a standard deviation of 8.88. While these are only estimates, they indicate that the average ABE/GED teacher encounters a number of students perceived to have learning disabilities. Only 35% of 188 responding teachers indicated they had adequate resources (people and information) to assist them with such students. Thus, while the number of learning disabled students which each teacher encounters may be perceived as low, the need for help in dealing with such students is

more significant. Additional items elaborating the types of assistance desired will be reported in a later section of this report.

Counselors were likewise asked if they knew of students suspected to have learning disabilities but not formally diagnosed. All counselors reported knowing of such students, with the estimated number of students ranging from 1 to 80. The mean estimate was 10.00 with a standard deviation of 18.92. The size of the standard deviation suggests there is considerable variability around the mean on this estimate. There were obviously not negative cases, as suggested by the extrapolation of figures one standard deviation below the mean; such an impression is merely an artifact of the positive skewness of the sample distribution. Counselors were also asked if students who had been formally diagnosed as learning disabled were enrolled in their programs. Sixty-one percent indicated there were such students. The number of identified LD students reported ranged from 0 to 30, with a mean of 6.61 and a standard deviation of 8.03. Combining known and suspected LD students, counselors reported anywhere from 0 to 100 learning disabled students per program, with a mean estimate of 16.59 (standard deviation of 26.71). While there is considerable variability in the estimates of the counselors, their estimates generally exceed those offered by teachers. It is likely that counselors would have the most accurate information regarding the number of identified students enrolled in programs, but the procedures of the study make it difficult to compare estimates offered by teachers and counselors from the same programs.

Although neither teacher nor counselor estimates permit any precise determination of the number of learning disabled students enrolled in the surveyed ABE/GED programs, these data suggest that: (a) LD students are enrolled in many ABE/GED programs throughout the state, (b) a significant number of additional students are suspected to have learning disabilities, and (c) most teachers are interested in receiving additional assistance with such students.

Means of Identifying Learning Disabled Students

Counselors were asked several questions regarding procedures and criteria used to identify learning disabled students within their programs. In order of frequency, the

methods of identification included: (a) self-reported history (57.14%); (b) teacher perceptions (45.71%); (c) test battery (34.29%); (d) another agency or organization (34.29%); (e) means other than those listed (16.67%); (f) check lists (5.71%) and, (g) physician (2.86%). Of those reporting means other than those listed, use of school records or placement history was mentioned by four counselors while two mentioned being personally involved in identification. When asked whether they themselves administerd tests to determine whether a student has a learning disability, five counselors indicated they did. Those counselors who did testing mentioned use of: an unspecified battery (2); the Wide Ranger Achievement Test (2); the Tests of Adult Basic Education (2); the Wechsler Adult Intellegence Scale (1); the Woodcock Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery (1); and the Bender Gestalt (1).

Half of the remaining counselors indicated they made a referral to another agency or organization for diagnosis. Referral sources mentioned included the local Intermediate Unit (I.U.), the office of Vocational Rehabilitation, universities, and individuals.

Only 27 counselors responded to a question regarding the criteria used to determine if a student in their programs have a learning disability. These criteria included in order of frequency: Teacher observations (6); multiple criteria (4); unknown (4); previous history (3); unspecified tests (2).

The responses counselors made to questions about identification indicate considerable variability in the way learning disabled students are identified within their programs, with self report and teacher perceptions the most common. It is essential that more reliable proedures for identifying learning disabled adults be established. Use of inappropriate measures and procedures is likely to lead to misidentification.

Instructional Practices

While not focusing directly on teaching of learning disabled students, two questionnaire items were aimed at assessing (a) the extent to which the individualized instruction which might be needed by learning disabled students was available within the existing classroom environment of ABE/GED classes, and (b) the extent to which teachers reported involving their students directly in goal setting. Such involvement may be critical

for the LD adult who often has limited time for remediation and development of compensatory strategies in a number of areas of learning difficulty.

Degree of Individualized Instruction. Teachers were asked to indicate the "typical" ways in which they worked with their students by filling in a percentage for each of several modes: (a) large group instruction, (b) small group instruction, and (c) individual instruction. Realizing that the classroom interactive mode might be influenced considerably by the achievement level of the students, these data were analyzed relative to the level of instruction. Table 4 indicates the proportion of time spent in each interactive format for teachers at each of three instructional levels. It should be noted that teachers may have reported more than one instructional level and would thus appear in more than one place in the table.

Table 4

Format of Instruction

	Grade Levels		
	0-4	5-8	9-12
	(given in percentage mean scores)		
Large Group	15.55	23.66	23.67
Small Group	31.00	27.73	33.16
Individual	53.03	49.81	43.39

The data presented in the table suggest that teachers at all levels spend a significant portion of their time involved in individual instruction with their students, with small group instruction occurring next most frequently. To the extent that students involved in the individualized classrooms reported here are actually engaged in teacher-assisted instruction, either on a one-to-one or small group basis, we would expect the classroom situations to be conducive to learning for LD adults. Individualized learning situations that require a great deal of independent learning by the students may not be as responsive to the

needs of learning disabled adults. Teachers may be supervising the independent learning activities of many students, making it difficult to spend an adequate amount of time in direct contact with the LD student.

Involvement of Adult Learners in Goal Setting. One questionnaire item directed toward teachers elicited information regarding the manner in which educational goals and activities were established. Teachers were asked to check those conditions which applied most of the time for their programs. The most frequently reported pattern for determining goals and activities was by the teacher according to perceived needs of the students (60.78%). Next most frequently reported was mutual determination of goals by student and teacher according to the student's stated educational priorities (50.49%). Approximately one-third (35.29%) of the teachers determined goals and activities based on the curriculum used in the class. Other methods of determining goals and activities were reported by 25% or fewer of the teachers: (a) at intake by the counselor (24.51%), (b) by the student, teacher and counselor at intake (21.57%), (c) by the student and counselor at intake(20.59%), (d) or by the teacher and counselor at intake (14.71%). These data indicate a mix of predominant patterns, including more use of teacher-controlled methods (teacher determines based on perceived needs of student or curriculum, or at intake by counselor) than participatory planning methods (teacher and student; student,teacher, and counselor at intake; or student and counselor at intake). Teachers who have had limited training in the teaching of adults and who come from elementary and secondary education backgrounds may be inclined to take a more directive role in planning the individual student's program unless inservice training or experience leads to experimentation with greater student participation in the planning process. Because some learning disabled students may have developed a certain degree of learned helplessness, it is imperative teachers provide opportunities for these students to give input into the design of their own learning experiences, as is generally suggested for adult students (Hamilton, 1983).

Existing Staff Development and Support Services

All respondents were asked about their awareness of available services for assessment and remediation of learning disabled students, consultation regarding such students, and staff development on this topic. They were asked to check whether a number of services were available through their programs. The following direct services were reported to be available for LD students by the designated proportion of staff members: (a) assessment -- 31.21%, and (b) L. D. specialist to work with students -- 14.80%. Linkages with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation or other agencies to provide services for adults with learning disabilities were reported by 40.15% of the staff members. Consultation to teachers regarding learning disabled students was reported to be available in the following forms: (a) learning disabilities specialist to assist teachers -- 17.33%, and (b) program counselor to assist teachers -- 38.18%. Curriculum materials appropriate for learning disabilities were said to be available by 33.82% of staff members, while 37.82% reported availability of printed resource materials concerning the characteristics and needs of adults with learning disabilities. Finally, a relatively small proportion of staff members reported available inservice training programs with a focus on the characteristics and needs of learning disabled adults (25.82%) and on methods of teaching adults with learning disabilities (22.02%). These data suggest that while some ABE/GED staff members are aware of existing direct services, consultative support, and inservice training regarding the learning disabled, the majority are not. Table 5 also illustrates the breakdown by staff regarding knowledge of available services related to learning disabled students.

Table 5

Reported Availability of Services Related to Learning Disabilities

Service	Percentage by Staff Role		
	Administrators	Teachers	Counselors
Assessment of students	28.07	31.77	33.33
L. D. specialist (helps students)	14.55	14.74	15.63
Referral Linkages	52.73	33.89	55.17
L. D. specialist (helps teachers)	21.43	16.40	15.63
Counselor (helps teachers)	40.35	34.76	54.84
Appropriate materials (for instruction)	40.00	30.85	40.63
Printed resources materials on topic	48.21	32.62	50.00
In-service training (LD characteristics)	28.07	25.81	21.88
In-service training (teaching methods)	24.56	21.28	21.88

Table 5 reveals some apparent differences in access to information about services according to role, with more administrators and counselors more inclined to report available services in several categories (referral linkages, counselor support to teachers, appropriate curriculum materials, and printed resource materials on learning disabilities). These data may reflect a relative lack of access to information for teachers about existing services, but also could reflect differences in perception, particularly with regard to availability of appropriate curriculum materials.

Perceived Need for Staff Development and Support Services

In addition to ascertaining the availability of support services and inservice training regarding learning disabilities for Act 306 program staff, another aim for this project was the assessment of perceived needs for additional support in this area. Administrators, teachers and counselors were asked not only to indicate whether the aforementioned services existed, but also to indicate their interest or lack of interest in such support if not

currently available. In almost all areas for which services were limited, staff reported an interest in seeing such services provided. Table 6 shows the level of perceived need for each form of support service, broken down by staff role. The table indicates there is greatest overall interest in in-service training on teaching methods for and characteristics of LD students. A majority of the personnel surveyed were also interested in LD specialist consultative support to teachers, additional assessment services, additional teaching and resource materials, and LD specialists to work with students. Those aspects of service indicated as a need by less than 50% of the respondents were services that were more frequently reported to be available (referral agencies and counselor consultation). The few services which were reported neither to be available nor to be important by 10% or more of the staff were: (a) LD specialist to work with students -- 30.32%; (b) LD specialist to work with teachers -- 21.30%; (c) program counselor to work with teachers -- 21.82%; and (d) referral linkages -- 12.88%. These data suggest that a sizeable minority of ABE/GED staff do not perceive a need for any support services other than for assessment of learning disabled students, in-service training regarding their characteristics and how to teach them, and access to appropriate teaching materials.

Table 6

Perceived Need for Services Related to Learning Disabilities

Service	Total	Percentage by Staff Role		
		Administrators	Teachers	Counselors
In-service training (teaching methods)	71.84	75.44	69.68	78.13
In-service training (characteristics of LD)	66.91	71.93	78.13	63.44
L. D. specialist (helps teachers)	61.37	69.64	59.26	59.38
Assessment of students	61.35	68.42	59.90	57.58
Teaching materials	58.55	50.91	61.17	56.25
Printed resources materials	57.45	50.00	60.96	50.00
L. D. specialist (helps students)	54.87	60.00	54.74	46.88
Referral Linkages	46.97	52.73	33.89	55.17
Counselor (helps teachers)	40.00	47.37	40.11	25.81

Administrators appear to be more interested than teachers and counselors in seeing specialized support services provided including assessment for learning disabilities, LD teachers to work with students, and LD teachers to work with teachers. Teachers appear to be more concerned than administrators or counselors with the provision of printed resources materials on learning disabilities and in-service training on the characteristics of learning disabled students, although they are somewhat less concerned with availability of referral sources and in-service training on teaching methods for learning disabled students.

Although a breakdown by role of those perceiving no need for indicated services seemed unwarranted here, it should be noted that no administrators fell in this category, while approximately 10% of teachers shared this perception.

Staff attitudes and knowledge

This section of the survey examined respondents' knowledge about learning disabilities as well as their attitudes toward students with learning disabilities. A Likert-type scale elicited responses along a continuum from "strongly agree" (1) to "strongly disagree" (6). The statistical technique used to analyze the data was the Kruskal-Wallis One-Way Analysis of Variance. As a measure of central tendency, an interpolation formula was used to compute medians for each item for administrators, counselors, and teachers. These results are found in Table 7.

Table 7

Medians of Items 7-31

Item#	Administrators	Counselors	Teachers
7.	2.19	2.17	2.05
8.	1.85	1.47	1.75
9.	5.82	5.90	5.74
10.	1.68	1.64	1.42
**11.	1.50	1.59	2.01
12.	5.28	5.44	4.94
13.	1.70	1.81	1.83
14.	3.61	3.72	3.53
15.	2.10	2.55	1.94
*16.	2.95	3.30	3.43
17.	1.82	2.13	2.18
18.	5.06	4.63	4.64
*19.	1.86	2.22	2.26
20.	1.73	2.03	2.09
21.	3.40	4.07	3.88
22.	4.97	4.91	4.91
**23.	3.57	3.27	3.05
24.	3.00	2.92	2.92
25.	4.70	4.77	4.58
26.	4.53	4.55	4.31
27.	3.47	3.14	3.24
***28.	2.12	2.27	2.99
** 29.	2.45	2.73	3.10
30.	3.76	3.10	3.32
31.	1.86	2.00	2.15

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Attitudes toward students with learning disabilities were generally positive, with all three groups agreeing that teaching learning disabled adults could be very rewarding. They also recognized that they needed to know more about the characteristics and needs of students with specific learning disabilites.

Accommodations for students with learning disabilities. All three groups agreed that it is acceptable to spend additional funds to make accommodations in their programs for LD students, and that learning disabled students should be allowed to use taped books. However, they did not believe that students with learning disabilities should be allowed to take untimed GED tests and tended to disagree that ABE/GED standards should be different for learning disabled students. When asked if their program had made accommodations for students with learning disabilities, all groups agreed, but teachers and counselors were slightly less sure that such accommodations had been made than were administrators.

Characteristics of LD adults. Although teachers and counselors tended to agree that they could recognize a learning disabled student, administrators tended to disagree. All groups of respondents strongly disagreed that persons with learning disabilities are also mentally retarded and believed that unique problems exist for each learning disabled student. They recognized that college was an appropriate goal for some individuals with learning disabilities, and denied that LD students who attended college would not succeed. However, they tended to believe that LD students should be considered handicapped.

All groups acknowledged that poor writing and spelling skills were problems frequently faced by learning disabled students, but they also believed that LD adults frequently find ways to compensate for their learning problems. When asked whether they felt that skill deficits in adults with learning disabilities were caused by poor study habits, they disagreed. Respondents also disagreed that support services for learning disabled students tend to delay development of self-reliance and independence, but did not believe that an individualized program for learning disabled students would be sufficient to eliminate learning problems.

They believed that people with learning disabilities have fewer employment opportunities than other adults, but were less sure whether learning disabled adults at ABE/GED levels were protected from discriminatory educational practices by federal law. In fact, 38 subjects did not respond at all to the question of legal protection and several persons wrote "Don't know" next to this question.

Knowledge of how to provide assistance. Respondents acknowledged that ABE/GED teachers should help adults with learning disabilities develop ways to get around their learning problems. All groups tended to agree that they knew when and how to provide assistance to learning disabled individuals in their classes, but there were significant differences between the groups in their knowledge of where to refer individuals with suspected learning disabilities for assessment and where to refer learning disabled students for help in receiving services. All groups either agreed or tended to agree that they knew where to refer students, but teachers were less sure of where to refer students for assessment, and counselors and teachers were less sure of where to refer LD students for help in receiving services.

General Comments

The questionnaire provided space for general comments. Many of these comments reinforced the need for further information and support services related to adult learning disabled students. One comment captures the sentiments raised by a number of staff persons:

> Each year the number of students with learning disabilities entering our programs has increased, yet the standards and goals of the programs have remained relatively constant. The range of disabilities within various classes is wide and impacts rather heavily upon the progress of the class groups with respect to program-achieved goals and objectives. There is a great need for training and meaningful dialogue among teachers and administrators at the state and local levels regarding program considerations and adaptations for students with learning disabilities in addition to a working definition for "learning disabled."

Although a few teachers expressed their confidence that individualized techniques were working for all their students, regardless of handicapping condition, others, especially GED teachers, expressed their frustration at not being able to provide the kind of support these students need. One especially poignant statement was made:

> I feel that there are many students in my program that have learning disabilities. I am very frustrated because the structure of the class and lack of funds does not allow them to receive the kind of help they need. I know that many of them, if in school today, would be detected and would receive Resource Room or other support services. But what do I do as their teacher? My students don't have the financial resources available to pursue psychological testing, diagnosis, and private education/tutoring necessary for them to succeed in obtaining their GED and improvement of skills. Thus, I feel that they are are likely to drop out of the GED program (again, because of frustration -- just like what they experienced in public school) and remain in their present situations (low paying jobs, no advancement, suffering from low self-esteem and continued frustration at a system that once again failed them. Please help!

A few individuals did question the utility of the learning disability label in referring to students in their programs. One administrator noted:

> Many of the students have been labeled (not necessarily "diagnosed") disabled due to trouble learning in school. Whether they do, in fact, have learning disabilities or not, they are still able to learn (and often at a fine pace) with a 1 to 1 tutor.

While this administrator's comments leave open the question of whether or not some of these students are actually learning disabled, the comments of a counselor question the wisdom of assigning a label to any learner.

> I have a problem with using "learning disabilities" as a label for a condition that is assumed to be static. I prefer to think of everyone as having a

> learning profile that changes depending on experiences, task, interest of learning and learning environment. There are problems in learning for everyone. Some of my agency's learners have many problems in learning reading and/or writing. Through constructive approaches to learning many of those problems are resolved which means they cannot be called "disabilities."

Another counselor, who has learning disabilities, is less apt to reject the category but nonetheless confirms the situational nature of the manifestations of learning disabilities. Regarding teaching and testing for GED preparation this person says:

> I think our current ABE/GED programs are completely off target in dealing with the learning disabled. From my experience, I have discovered there are days when I can read and days when reading is impossible. I know other LD people have the same problem. However, we sit them down in our GED classes by themselves and have them misread information for an hour or two at a time.
>
> I fail most multiple choice tests I have to take. While in college, I compensated by taking classes where I was evaluated by a variety of means rather than just multiple choice tests. The GED is primarily a multiple choice test. While I do support giving the test untimed, if the adult is misreading the questions, it doesn't matter how much time s/he has.

The difficulty of providing appropriate compensatory mechanisms was reiterated by one of the several staff members working in the prison setting who made comments about the particular problems of that setting.

> Prison rules/regulations prohibit many LD type devices (video, tape recorder, talking books). Source [sic] for materials is limited to other funding/programmatic sources, i.e. need talking books in social studies -- but only funded for blind. No budget for special materials/technologies.

Although numerous other comments were made, one which most succinctly captures the sentiments of most who commented simply:

> An area that is difficult to get a handle on. Could definitely use more staff development in this area.

Comments generally agreed with data from the rest of the questionnaire in indicating a genuine interest in further learning and additional support services related to learning disabled adults.

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Summary and Conclusions

The difficulty of locating learning disabled adults participating in ABE/GED and literacy programs for a previous study, along with the lack of written information on perceptions of learning disabilities and need for staff development of ABE/GED staff in this area, suggested the value of the current investigation. A survey of paid ABE/GED staff in the state of Pennsylvania was conducted to determine several kinds of information: (a) sources of previous education focusing on learning disabilities, (b) current perceptions regarding the characteristics, needs and capabilities of learning disabled adults; (c) knowledge of existing staff development opportunities and resources for support services to teachers and LD students , and (d) perceived need for additional staff development programs and support services.

Substantial modifications were made to a questionnaire originally designed to assess perceptions of college faculty regarding learning disabilities. The redesigned questionnaire included common questions asked of all staff members, and specific questions based on staff roles of administrator, teacher or counselor. After soliciting the participation of program directors of ABE/GED programs funded through Act 306, questionnaires were mailed to program directors,teachers, and counselors working in their programs. Forty-six percent of the programs in the state participated. Questionnaires were in some cases mailed directly to teachers and counselors, while in other cases program directors acted as intermediaries to distribute the questionnaires to staff members. In all cases questionnaires were returned directly to the investigators, assuring confidentiality. In all, 62% of the questionnaires were returned in useable form.

Data were analyzed through both quantitative and qualitative techniques. For purposes of analysis, respondents were classified according to the role they indicated was primary, although it should be noted that many staff members acted in multiple roles. Quantitative analysis was primarily of a descriptive nature, with frequency counts and

percentage distributions reported. One set of items required a ranked likert-style response, permitting significance tests for group differences, and in fact several differences among the groups emerged. Content analysis was utilized to examine the open-ended responses and personal definitions of the term learning disability generated by the respondents.

Useable questionnaires were received from 205 teachers, 64 administrators and 37 counselors. The sample was almost equally divided among males and females. Many of the teachers reported specializing in one or more content areas, with reading (60%), math (56%) and writing (56%) most prevalent. More of the teachers taught students at achievement levels equivalent to grades 5-8 (68%) than grades 9-12 (51%) or grades 0-1 (42%). Many of the teachers brought previous experience in elementary or secondary education, representing a wide array of content areas, and 17% reported previous experience as special education teachers.

Most respondents previously had acquired information about learning disabilities from one or more sources, most frequently from workshops (67%), professional journals (67%) and coursework (51%). Some also reported acquiring information about learning disabilities from the media (49.5%) or from direct experience on the job or with family members, friends, or neighbors with learning disabilities. This suggests that while many ABE/GED staff members feel a need for additional information on this topic, most bring some knowledge background to planned staff development activities.

Participants were asked to give their own definitions of the term learning disability. Their definitions often included components found in the federal and state definitions used for placement of learning disabled youth (Chalfant, 1985). For instance, among the five most frequently used criteria found in respondent definitions three are among the five most frequently used by states for categorization as well: information processing problems, average or better ability, and a discrepancy between ability level and achievement. Less frequently included in respondent definitions were elements focusing on etiology and academic failure (not specified in terms of discrepancy); they rarely included elements

denoting the exclusion of other primary causes of the learning problem. On the other hand, many of the definitions given by respondents referred to generic learning problems with various causes, mentioned physical or mental handicaps as a causative factor, or referred to a failure to learn by conventional means. While some who focused on the failure to learn from traditional instruction made reference to processing problems or other standard LD definition components, a number of people used this criterion alone. The failure to mention exclusion of other causes of the learning problems and the frequency of reference to generic learning problems suggests ABE/GED personnel do not necessarily use the same criteria in referring to student learning disabilities as those commonly applied in the school setting. This has obvious implications for possible miscommunication between ABE/GED staff and those from a special education framework who may work with them. There has already been criticism offered of the reasonably wide variation in the operationalization of LD definitions in schools and the danger of equating LD with underachievement (Chalfant, 1985; Tugend, 1985; Algozzine & Ysseldyke, 1987) An even broader definition, if utilized in adult education, can lead to overidentification and unnecessary labeling, making it even more difficult to conduct research or make recommendations regarding the adult LD population.

The estimates of the numbers of learning disabled students participating in ABE/GED programs given by respondents indicates the tendency to classify any underachievement as LD may not be as great as suggested by the definitions. The responses to the questions made it difficult to determine estimated percentages of LD students as intended, but most staff members only perceived a few of their students to have learning disabilities.

A core of questions eliciting information about existing and desired staff development opportunities and other support services was revealing. Aside from awareness of referral agencies (40%), program counselors to assist teachers with learning disabled students (38%) and available printed resource materials on learning disabilities

(38%), most forms of direct support and inservice training were perceived as relatively nonavailable. Staff responses to questions regarding their interest in additional supportive services and training indicated a strong desire for : (a) inservice activities on the characteristics of learning disabled adults and methods for teaching them;(b) printed materials, both about learning disabilities and for use as part of the curriculum with LD students; (c) services for assessment and remediation of learning disabled students, and (d) consultative support from LD specialists.

While respondents generally held positive attitudes toward students with learning disabilities, they were not knowledgeable about the legal considerations that must be given to these students as a result of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. In fact, adults with learning disabilities are entitled to reasonable accommodations which include untimed testing if necessary. Inservice training should provide information about the characteristics of LD adults along with information about their legal rights.

Another topic that might be included in inservice training would be how to refer students for help in receiving services and where to refer a student suspected of having learning disabilities for assessment. Although respondents tended to know how to assist LD students nearly as many did not know. All three groups felt that they needed to know more about the characteristics and needs of adults with learning disabiilties. It would be helpful if teachers, administrators, and counselors had access to specific instructional strategies for these students.

Recommendations

Recommendations are presented here both for a service model and for future research.

Multi-Level Service Model. The need for a multi-tiered approach to serving the needs of learning disabled adults in adult basic education programs is supported by the results of this study. Such an approach would emphasize the value of mainstreaming and educating the L.D. adult in the least restrictive environment, while providing specialized

direct services to a segment of the LD adult population. Effective staff development programs would be critical to the success of such an approach. A schema for such an approach is presented here for further consideration:

I. Staff Development
   - A. Learning Styles
   - B. Teaching Adult Students
   - C. Alternative Strategies for Basic Skills Instruction
   - D. Sources of Learning Problems in Adult Students
   - E. Specific Learning Disabilities
     1. Characteristics
     2. Screening Measures
     3. Referral Sources
     4. Interpreting Diagnostic Reports
     5. Instructional Strategies Appropriate for Subtypes
   - F. Legal Considerations and Reasonable Accomodations for Students with Learning Disabilities

II. Ongoing Consultation with Teachers
   - A. Specialists within the system
   - B. External Consultation with Specialists from Other Disciplines

III. Direct Services
   - A. Assessment
   - B. Remedial Instruction
   - C. Learning Strategy Development
   - D. Counseling (Individual and Family)
   - E. Referral to Support Services and Vocational Training Programs

Level One of this model would primarily be implemented through in-service programs. Program directors, insofar as they act in a supervisory capacity, would play a role in encouraging staff development through formal and informal means extending beyond in-service programs: e.g., university courses, reading, and on-the-job support.

Level Two would provide consultation to teachers regarding students who have been identified or who are suspected to have learning disabilities. Before formal referral for evaluation, consultants would assist teachers in conducing curriculum-based assessment. For those students identified as having learning disabilities, trained specialists would work with teachers to help them interpret diagnostic information and translate it into teaching plans. Such specialists could also work with trained volunteers who may provide tutorial support to LD students. Diagnostic teaching models could be implemented with the guidance of such specialists who would be available to make continuing suggestions. Based on this study, it seems apparent that a number of people already within the system have the experience and expertise to serve in such roles. A limited number of adult basic education programs in the state already make use of specialists in this fashion.

It would also be valuable to identify a pool of external consultants representing levels or areas of expertise not typically needed within the system. This should include psychologists, neurologists, rehabilitation counselors and specialists representing other disciplines which have previously been involved in studying learning disabilities and providing interventions to LD individuals and their families.

Finally, Level Three would be reserved for those cases where it is warranted. Assessment services would be most frequently utilized, with the goal that many of the students would continue to work with regular adult basic education teachers once diagnosed. Assessment should include a comprehensive battery of measures including hearing and vision screening, an individual intelligence test, achievement tests, and tests of cognitive processing. A personal interview and data obtained informally by the teacher should also be considered by the diagnostic team. Counseling services should also be

available on a broad basis to LD students whose instruction may be taking place either in a specialized or mainstream setting. Finally, some students may need at least temporary specialized instruction. Some students might be referred to such services due to the severity of their basic skills deficits and lack of progress in the mainstream setting even after diagnostic teaching. Students with complex patterns of learning disabilities may also benefit from periods of diagnostic teaching by a specialist who would then make recommendations to a mainstream ABE/GED teacher based on the student's identified learning strengths and weaknesses. Specialists, having frequent contact with LD students, also may be helpful for short-term learning strategies counseling or training to help students identify compensatory techniques to use beyond the instructional setting. Practice and generalization of such techniques could then be incorporated into the instructional program students pursue upon returning to mainstream services.

Research Needs. Addititional research of ABE/GED staff perceptions regarding learning disabilities and desire for staff development should be conducted on a national level or regional level, although local needs may vary and should also be considered in planning. Appropriate roles and training needs for volunteer tutors is a second area which urgently requires study, especially as literacy campaigns continue. Often, it is the volunteer tutor who is assigned to the LD adult who may bring the lowest literacy skills. While the individual instruction provided through tutoring is valuable and often can be provided on only a limited basis in the ABE/GED classroom, insufficient training of volunteers may counteract some of the benefits of one-on-one instruction. Further, models of intervention need to be developed and tested with adult students with learning disabilities.

Finally, more effective procedures need to be developed for determining estimated incidence of specific learning disabilities in the ABE/GED student population. Policy decisions related to staff development and provision of direct services will continue to be difficult to make until more reliable estimates of need become available.

After two decades of consideration of the needs of learning disabled children, educators are still working to identify the the most appropriate models for evaluation and intervention. This task is complicated by the heterogeneity of the population of learning disabled individuals, and by the limits of our current understanding of the causes and nature of learning disabilities. It is unlikely that the challenges facing the field of adult education in serving adults with learning disabilities will be resolved overnight. We can begin to take steps in the appropriate direction by carefully studying the needs of both learners and teachers in one domain of adult education where a concern for this population has been clearly identified, that of adult basic and general education.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX A-1

ABE/GED Survey
Students with Learning Disabilities

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. What is your present role in your adult education program? (Please rank items that apply in order of primary job responsibility: 1=major responsibility. Leave areas blank that are unrelated to your job.)

	Years in this role:
_____ Program administration	_____
_____ Teacher	_____
_____ Counselor/advisor to adult students	_____
_____ Assessment	_____
_____ Development of individual education plans	_____
_____ Trainer of volunteer tutors	_____
_____ Other (please specify)	_____

2. Sex: M___ F___ 3. Highest level of education attained _____

4. How have you acquired information about learning disabilities? (Please check all that apply)
___Workshops
___Reading professional journals
___Coursework
___Media (television, radio, magazines, newspapers)
___Other life experience with learning disabilities through a family member, neighbor, or friend.
___Other (please describe)_____

5. How would you personally define learning disabilities?_____

_____

_____

6. Check (1) if the following are available through your program,
(2) if not available and you think it should be provided, or
(3) if not available, but you don't think it's important:

___ Assessment for the purpose of determining whether a student has specific learning disabilities

___ Learning disabilities specialist to assist teachers in working with individual students

___ Learning disabilities specialist to work directly with students with learning disabilities

___ Program counselor to assist teachers in working with individual students with learning disabilities

___ In-service training (workshops or presentations by professionals) concerning the characteristics and needs of adults with specific learning disabilities

___ In-service training on methods of teaching adults with learning disabilities

___ Printed resource materials concerning characteristics and needs of adults with learning disabilities

___ Curriculum materials appropriate for learning disabled adults

___ Linkage with vocational rehabilitation and other agencies to provide services for adults with learning disabilities

___ Other resources (Please describe)_____

_____

PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING ITEMS BY CIRCLING THE NUMBER THAT CORRESPONDS WITH YOUR RESPONSE:

1 Strongly Agree
2 Agree
3 Tend to Agree
4 Tend to Disagree
5 Disagree
6 Strongly Disagree

7. Learning disabled people have fewer employment opportunities than other adults.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. I believe that teaching learning disabled adults could be very rewarding.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. Learning disabled persons are also mentally retarded.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. Unique problems exist for each learning disabled student.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. College is an appropriate goal for some learning disabled students.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. Learning disabled students who attend college are not likely to succeed.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. It is acceptable to spend additional funds to make accomodations in ABE/GED programs for learning disabled students.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. Learning disabled students should not be considered handicapped.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. Poor writing and spelling skills are problems frequently faced by learning disabled students.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. This ABE/GED program has made accommodations for learning disabled students.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. Learning disabled students should be allowed to utilize taped books.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. Learning disabled students should not be allowed to take untimed GED tests.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. Learning disabled adults frequently find ways to compensate for their learning problems.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. ABE/GED teachers should help adults with learning disabilities develop ways to get around their learning problems.	1	2	3	4	5	6
21. To be realistic, ABE/GED standards should be different for learning disabled students.	1	2	3	4	5	6
22. Skill deficits in learning disabled adults are most likely caused by poor study habits.	1	2	3	4	5	6
23. I can recognize a learning disabled student.	1	2	3	4	5	6
24. I know when to provide assistance to learning disabled individuals in my class.	1	2	3	4	5	6

25. Support services for learning disabled students tend to delay development of self-reliance and independence. 1 2 3 4 5 6

26. An individualized program for learning disabled students is sufficient to eliminate learning problems. 1 2 3 4 5 6

27. I know how to offer assistance to learning disabled students in my class. 1 2 3 4 5 6

28. I know where to refer someone suspected of having a learning disability for assessment. 1 2 3 4 5 6

29. I know where to refer learning disabled students for help in receiving services. 1 2 3 4 5 6

30. Learning disabled adults at ABE/GED levels are protected from discriminatory educational practices by federal law. 1 2 3 4 5 6

31. I need to know more about the characteristics and needs of students with specific learning disabilities. 1 2 3 4 5 6

PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING SECTION THAT APPLIES TO YOU:

COMPLETE THIS SECTION ONLY IF YOU ARE A **PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR**:

32. Does your program provide inservice training on learning disabilities to your staff? Yes___ No___

If yes, please describe how and when this is done_____

_____

33. Do you provide other resources to your staff on the subject of learning disabilities? Yes___ No___

If yes, please describe _____

34. Which of the following do you think that the state department of education should assist with?

___ Technical assistance regarding learning disabled adults for
- ___ program administrators
- ___ counselors
- ___ teachers

___ Opportunities for staff to attend state or regional workshops or conferences on the topic of adult students with learning disabilities

___ Financial assistance in providing on-site in-service training

35. Do you have persons on your staff with training and/or experience in learning disabilities or other areas of special education? Yes___ No___ If yes:

A. What is their major job responsibility?_____

_____

B. What is their educational background?_____

Additional comments and concerns:

COMPLETE THIS SECTION ONLY IF YOU ARE A **TEACHER**:

36. Do you teach in a specific content area? Yes___ No___
    If yes, which one(s)?
    Reading___ Writing skills___ Math___ Science____ Social Studies___

    Vocational skills___ Other (please specify) _____

37. What level(s) do you teach? 0-4___ 5-8___ 9-12___

38. What is typical of the way you work with your students?

    Large group instruction ____% Small group instruction ___% Individual instruction ___%

39. If individual instruction is used it is primarily:
    Independent seat work (using work books or assignments)___
    Direct instruction in skill areas _____
    Other (Please specify)_____

40. How are students' educational goals and activities established? (Check those that apply most of the time)
    ___ At intake by the counselor
    ___ By the student and counselor at intake
    ___ By the teacher and counselor at intake
    ___ By the student, teacher, and counselor at intake
    ___ By the teacher according to perceived needs of the student from day to day
    ___ By the teacher according to curriculum used in the class
    ___ By the student and the teacher according to student's stated educational priorities

41. How many years teaching experience do you have in areas other than adult education? ____

    In what area(s)_____

42. Teaching certification held? Yes____No___ If yes, in what areas_____

43. Do you have students in your program who are suspected of having a learning disability, but have not been formally diagnosed as learning disabled? Yes___ No___ If yes, approximately how many?____

44. What is the estimated total number of students with learning disabilities in your program?_____

45. Do you feel that you have adequate resources (people and information) available to assist you with these students? Yes___ No___

Additional comments and concerns:

COMPLETE THIS SECTION ONLY IF YOU ARE A **COUNSELOR**:

46. Do you have specific training/ certification in psychological testing or in learning disabilites or other areas of special education? Yes___ No___
If yes, please describe_____

_____

47. Do you have students in your program who have been formally diagnosed as learning disabled?
Yes___ No___ If yes, how many?___

48. In what way have students in your program been identified learning disabled? (Check all that apply)
___ Teacher perceptions ___ Another agency or organization ___ Check lists
___ Self-reported history ___ Test battery ___ Physician
___ Other (please describe)_____

49. Do you administer tests to determine whether or not students suspected of having a learning disability do, in fact, have such a disability? Yes___ No___

If yes, what tests/instruments do you use for this purpose? _____

_____

If no, is there an agency or organization to which you refer students for diagnosis? Yes___ No___

If yes, please specify_____

50. What criteria are used to determine if a student in your program has a learning disability?

_____

51. Do you have students in your program who are suspected of having a learning disability, but have not been formally diagnosed as learning disabled? Yes___ No___ If yes, approximately how many?____

52. What is the estimated total number of students with learning disabilities in your program?_____

53. Are teachers in your program generally knowledgeable about the characteristics and needs of students with specific learning disabilities? Yes___ No___

Additional comments and concerns:

APPENDIX B

LETTERS AND FORMS

PENNSTATE

(814) 865-1487

College of Education
Division of Education Policy Studies

Rackley Building
The Pennsylvania State University
University Park, PA 16802

Feb. 2, 1988

Dear Program Director:

Your assistance is requested with an important 310 project designed to provide more information about the needs of 306 program staff for information regarding learning disabilities in adults they serve. The project will investigate the previous training, current knowledge level, and desire for additional training with regard to learning disabilities for 306 program teachers, counselors, and directors. To carry out this study we hope to obtain from you the mailing addresses of paid staff members serving in the specified roles within your program. A brief questionnaire (no more than 45 items) will then be mailed to those teachers and counselors whose names we receive from you. You also will receive a copy of the questionnaire designed for program administrators. No more than 20 minutes of your time will be required to complete it.

We know that the topic of student learning disabilities is one which concerns many staff members in adult basic education and GED programs. As a result of this project we hope to be able to make suggestions regarding how these personnel can best be assisted in preparing to meet the needs of clientele known or suspected to have specific learning disabilities. The project will also enable us to identify resources that are being utilized around the state for identification and consultation regarding learning disabilities in adults. Our results will be shared directly with the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Division of Adult Basic Education. An abbreviated version of the report will be made available to participating programs directors.

We hope you will respond favorably to participation in this project. To do so, please return the enclosed response form with along with the names and addresses of paid teachers and counselors in your programs. We assure you that these names and addresses will be treated with complete confidentiality, as will all surveys completed as part of this project. Your response by February 15 will be most helpful. Please get in touch with either of us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Jovita M. Ross

Judith O. Smith

Jovita M. Ross
Assistant Professor, Adult Education
Project Director
(814) 863-3781

Judith Smith
Doctoral Candidate, Special Education
Project Assistant
(814) 863-2261

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_____ Yes. My program will be involved in the project to determine ABE/GED staff's perceptions of learning disabilities in adults and staff development needs in this area. I have enclosed lists of the names and addresses of any paid teachers and counselors in my program.

_____ No. My program cannot be involved in the project.

_____ I am interested in having my program involved in the project, but prefer not to send names and addresses of my staff for direct mailing. Instead, I am willing to distribute the questionnaires and keep track of which ones have been returned. **Please send me _____ questionnaires for distribution to teachers and _____ for counselors.**

(If you choose to distribute the questionnaire to your staff we will need your assistance in sending one follow-up to those who do not return the first copy. To protect the confidentiality of participants we will ask that questionnaires be returned to you in a sealed envelope which we will mark ahead of time with an ID number to assist you with follow-up.)

_____ Yes. My program will be involved in the project to determine ABE/GED staff's perceptions of learning disabilities in adults and staff development needs in this area. I have enclosed lists of the names and addresses of any paid teachers and counselors in my program.

_____ No. My program cannot be involved in the project.

_____ I am interested in having my program involved in the project, but prefer not to send names and addresses of my staff for direct mailing. Instead, I am willing to distribute the questionnaires and keep track of which ones have been returned. **Please send me _____ questionnaires for distribution to teachers and _____ for counselors.**

(If you choose to distribute the questionnaire to your staff we will need your assistance in sending one follow-up to those who do not return the first copy. To protect the confidentiality of participants we will ask that questionnaires be returned to you in a sealed envelope which we will mark ahead of time with an ID number to facilitate follow-up.)

_____ Yes. My program will be involved in the project to determine ABE/GED staff's perceptions of learning disabilities in adults and staff development needs in this area. I have enclosed lists of the names and addresses of any paid teachers and counselors in my program.

_____ No. My program cannot be involved in the project.

_____ I am interested in having my program involved in the project, but prefer not to send names and addresses of my staff for direct mailing. Instead, I am willing to distribute the questionnaires and keep track of which ones have been returned. **Please send me _____ questionnaires for distribution to teachers and _____ for counselors.**

(If you choose to distribute the questionnaire to your staff we will need your assistance in sending one follow-up to those who do not return the first copy. To protect the confidentiality of participants we will ask that questionnaires be returned to you in a sealed envelope which we will mark ahead of time with an ID number to facilitate follow-up.)

PENNSTATE

(814) 865-1487

College of Education
Division of Education Policy Studies

Rackley Building
The Pennsylvania State University
University Park, PA 16802

February 24, 1988

Dear Adult Educator:

The attached survey concerned with learning disabled adults in ABE/GED programs is part of a statewide study being conducted by the Adult Education Program at Penn State University as a 310 Grant under the Division of Adult Education of the Pennsylvania Department of Education. This project is concerned specifically with the knowledge, perceptions, and needs of ABE/GED staff regarding adult learning disabilities. The results of this survey will provide information valuable for planning services to better address the needs of learning disabled adults in ABE/GED programs.

We are particularly desirous of obtaining your responses because your experience in adult education will contribute significantly toward understanding the problems we face in this important area of adult education. The enclosed survey has been tested with a sampling of ABE and GED teachers and counselors, and we have revised it in order to make it possible for us to obtain all necessary data while requiring a minimum of your time. The approximate time required to fill out the survey is 15-20 minutes.

It will be appreciated if you will complete the enclosed form prior to March 14 and return it in the postage paid envelope enclosed. Other phases of this research cannot be carried out until we complete analysis of the survey data. We would welcome any comments that you may have concerning any aspect of working with adult learning disabled students not covered in the survey. Your responses will be held in strictest confidence.

We will be pleased to send you a summary of the survey results if you desire. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Jovita M. Ross

Jovita M. Ross, Ed.D.
Assistant Professor, Adult Education

(814) 863-3781

Judith Smith

Judith Smith
Doctoral Candidate,
Special Education
(814) 863-2261

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PENNSTATE

(814) 865-1487

College of Education
Division of Education Policy Studies

Rackley Building
The Pennsylvania State University
University Park, PA 16802

February 24, 1988

Dear Program Director:

Thank you for participating in the study of ABE/GED staff perceptions of students with learning disabilities, sponsored by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and conducted through the Adult Education Program at Penn State.

You indicated that you would be willing to distribute questionnaires to paid teachers and counselors in your program. For your convenience a form is enclosed to help you to keep track of the identification numbers of participants. Please be sure your list accurately matches the number of the questionnaire assigned to each participant, including yourself. Please keep your list until April 4, by which time we will notify you of the identification numbers of persons who have not returned the completed survey to us.

To administer the survey, simply distribute one to each teacher and counselor, along with a cover letter and a return envelope. Instruct participants to seal the completed questionnaire in the envelope and place it directly in the mail. In addition, please take a few minutes to complete a questionnaire yourself. We would appreciate receiving responses by March 14.

We will be pleased to send you a summary of the final results if you wish. Please include a stamped self-addressed envelope for this purpose. Once again, thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Jovita M. Ross

Judith O. Smith

Jovita M. Ross, Ed.D.
Assistant Professor
Adult Education
(814) 863-3781

Judith O. Smith
Doctoral Candidate
Special Education
(814)863-2261

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APPENDIX B-5

310 Questionnaire -- Adult Learning Disabilities

ID Number	Name of Staff Member
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
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_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

PENNSTATE

(814) 865-1487

College of Education
Division of Education Policy Studies

Rackley Building
The Pennsylvania State University
University Park, PA 16802

February 26, 1988

Dear Program Director:

You have agreed to have your program participate in a study of ABE/ GED staff perceptions of students with learning disabilities, sponsored by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and conducted through the Adult Education Program at Penn State. Within the last two days a batch of questionnaires was mailed to you for administration to your staff. A cover letter sent with those questionnaires indicated that we were including a form intended to help you keep track of the identification numbers coded on questionnaires you distribute to your staff. Since we intend for your staff to use postage-paid envelopes to return their questionnaires directly to us, your list ID matching numbers with names of individuals is the only way you will be able to help us with follow-up on unreturned questionnaires. We will notify you in April of any ID numbers mailed to you for which we have not yet received responses. Inadvertently we failed to include these tracking forms with the questionnaires when they were mailed. You will find one or more forms included with this letter, depending on the number of questionnaires you received.

Thank you again for your assistance with this project.

Sincerely,

Jovita M. Ross

Jovita M. Ross, Ed.D.
Assistant Professor of Adult Education (814) 863-3781

An Equal Opportunity University

APPENDIX B-7

PENNSTATE

(814) 865-1487

College of Education
Division of Education Policy Studies

Rackley Building
The Pennsylvania State University
University Park, PA 16802

March 29, 1988

Dear Adult Educator:

You should have recently received a copy of a questionnaire mailed to teachers, counselors and administrators in ABE and GED programs. The questionnaire contains a number of questions regarding perceptions of adult learning disabilities, educational preparation for working with this group, and needs for further learning in this area. The research we are conducting as part of a 310 project will provide information useful to the Pennsylvania Department of Education in assessing the needs of ABE/GED staff in this area.

According to our records we have not yet received your response. We hope you will take a few minutes to complete the replacement copy which has been mailed with this letter. It should take no more than 20 minutes. Your response is very important if we are to have a representative group of teachers, counselors and administrators. One thing we are finding out from the survey is that many people serve multiple functions. If you are one of these people, be sure to rank your roles on item number one of the questionnaire so that we know to which group you primarily belong.

If you have already returned your completed questionnaire, please return the enclosed questionnaire blank with a note to that effect, so that we can double check our records.

Thank you for your cooperation in this project. Please call if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Jovita M. Ross

Judith O Smith

Jovita M. Ross, Ed.D.
Assistant Professor, Adult Education
(814) 863-3781

Judith O. Smith
Doctoral Candidate, Special Education
(814) 863-2261

An Equal Opportunity University

PENNSTATE

(814) 865-1487

College of Education
Division of Education Policy Studies

Rackley Building
The Pennsylvania State University
University Park, PA 16802

March 29, 1988

Dear Program Director:

We thank you again for your participation in our study of ABE/GED staff perceptions of students with learning disabilities. We have received a number of returns and think the survey will yield very useful information.

Since you are one of the program directors who elected to distribute the questionnaires within your program in lieu of giving us the names and addresses of staff members for direct mailing, we are writing now to solicit your help with the follow-up phase. We hope that you received the form intended to help you track ID numbers which you matched to staff members before you distributed the surveys. A list of the ID numbers we have not received from your program is provided at the close of this letter. Please distribute the enclosed questionnaires and reminder letters to those staff members. If you did not receive the tracking form before distribution, this system may not work as effectively. Perhaps a note to your staff members reminding them to return their questionnaires and mentioning how they can get access to replacement copies of the questionnaire will provide a suitable alternative approach to the follow-up.

If you have not yet had an opportunity to return your own questionnaire we hope you will carve out a few minutes from your busy schedules to complete it. We have received quite a number of questionnaires from program directors, and wish to thank those of you who have already responded. We hope to get good representation from all three groups surveyed: teachers, counselors, and program directors. One thing we are finding out from the survey is that many people serve multiple functions. If you are one of these people, be sure to rank your roles on item number one of the questionnaire so that we know to which group you primarily belong.

Once again, thanks for your participation and help. Please call if you have any questions regarding this phase of the project.

Sincerely,

Jovita M Ross

Judith O. Smith

Jovita M. Ross, Ed. D.
Assistant Professor, Adult Education
(814) 863-3781

Judith O. Smith
Doctoral Candidate, Special Education
(814) 863-2261

An Equal Opportunity University

APPENDIX C

RESPONDENT COMMENTS

Appendix C-1

Comments Made By Teachers

C-01.2--Students with learning disabilities are primarily referred to our special education class but have not been dealt with in the ABE program. We handle so many students that it is difficult, except in the special education class, to deal with the individual student who has a learning disability.

C-027.4--Find it most questionable if the amount of time for instruction meets the needs of the handicapped student.

C-027.6--Because my instruction is individualized, I'm able to meet their needs as is required.

C-027.7--The student population consists of prison inmates. The social studies program is broad scope in nature. The topics are all selected and related to social living. The program lacks the formality of other regular academic programs.

C-044--There is so much to cover in a very short period of time that GED students with difficulities often get lost in the shuffle. A small group setting would be ideal for success.

I might not really have the chance to identify LD students. It occurs to me that the students who drop out early in our program are possibly LD students who just cannot cope with the work.

C-065.3--Prison rules/regulations prohibit many LD type devices (video, tape recorder, talking books). Source for materials is limited to other funding/programmatic sources, i.e. need talking book in social studies - but only funded for blind. No budget for special materials/technologies.

C-079.1--Our educational facility needs to expand the classes toward seeking out the specific needs of students with learning disabilities. We, financially, are in need of more appropriations in reaching this goal. Our staff is limited.

C-079.2--Counseling is essential to the Adult Education Program. Many people leave high school as a result of a learning disability. The disability doesn't go away just because an individual enters another educational environment. Available resources, training, and workshops would be an asset to any Adult Educational Program.

C-080.12--I would welcome additional training in diagnosis, teaching, curriculum development, of learning disabled students.

C-082.1--The lack of support and services in our program is not due to the lack of concern but to the lack of time, space and funding.

C-087--I feel that there are many students in my program that have learning disabilities. I am very frustrated because the structure of the class and lack of funds does not allow them to receive the kind of help they need. I know that many of them, if in school today, would be detected and would receive Resource Room or other support services.

But what do I do as their teacher? My students don't have the financial resources available to pursue psychological testing, diagnosis, and private education/tutoring necessaryfor them to succeed in obtaining their GED and improvement of skills. Thus, I feel that they are likely to drop out of the GED program (again, because of frustration - just like what they experienced in public school) and remain in their present situations (low paying jobs, no advancement, suffering from low self-esteem and continued frustration at a system that once again failed them).

Please help!

C-087.3--I am always open for new ideas and information on LD.

I feel the major reason for students entering my class is to pass the GED test. My purpose is to help them pass the test. In individualized tutoring, the diagnostic tools I've used are: Slosson, Informal Reading Inventory, Gate-Mac Ginitie Reading Test, Informal Writing Test and Digit Memory Span Test. In tutoring, this is possible; however, in a classroom of 12 adults it is very time consuming.

C-094.5--Our program does not diagnose any type of "special students." Many times we (the teachers) find out that a student was in public special ed. classes through informal discussions with the students, or through second-hand reports from acquaintances of the students.

C-138.1--In my small rural setting any meaningful assistance for older adults is likely to remain on a low priority.

C-142.2--We need an L.D. Specialist available to assist content area teachers in finding ways of reaching these L.D. students. Math, science, social studies teachers have no experience in dealing with such.

C-148.3--I usually do not suspect a learning disability until I have worked with the students for a period of time. We have a very poor diagnostic tool for placement. It is very, very difficult to find proper materials, and time for individual instruction when 15 out of 20 students want you now, and you are working with your lower students. Also, the transiency helps defeat the purpose of the educational program.

C-250--I work with learning disabilities in my everyday class setting and I have worked on an individual level with my adult students at night over the years.

My main area of concern has been reading.

C-258--We have an inmate population approaching 3000. If an estimated 40% (conservatively) exhibit special education needs, this would amount to 1200. With two special education teachers, each teaching one morning section and one afternoon section, this amounts to 300 students per section. In actuality, we attempt to provide services to 15 students per section (5 days/week, 12 months/year divided into 3 trimesters).

C-260--The ESL students are all put together. They are not tested for learning disabilities because they would still be placed in the same class.

Non-ESL students can be tested for learning disabilities and placed in a special education classroom if so recommended by teacher or counselor.

An argument could be made that the whole school population has a learning disability in that they are being prisoners they are social misfits.

C-269--I recently discussed this issue with several teachers and find it a growing concern. I am pleased that the state Division of Education Policy at Penn State is focusing on this problem.

C-277--I can easily draw on my materials from my regular teaching position. Also, I can contact the LD teacher in my classroom. I realize other instructors are not as fortunate as I am, since I have a wealth of sources.

C-286--I am assigned to York County Prison with another teacher with both of us sharing a teaching load of 13 hours per week. We are responsible for both counseling and teaching the inmates as well as the administration of the program. We presently have over 80 students and this necessitates most of their work being done independantly in their cells.

Although I am not a special education, my full-time employment as an alternative educator teacher with [I. C. #12] has exposed me to many special education classifications and concepts.

C-287--I also have many slow learners and educable mentally retarded.

C-288--Working under an LTU gives me the resources I need when dealing with my students.

C-312--It is very difficult to put a number on a student who may have a L.D. without proper diagnostic instruments. Some L.D.'s are highly visible, others more subtle to detect; the need for I.Q. certification of L.D.'s is needed as is a follow through (prognosis). At this time we can only refer students to the N.W. Tri County District but for various reasons this doesn't work out too well.

C039.7--More staff and funds are needed for adult education. Separate buildings must also be set aside for the growing number of adults. Also, counselors in learning disabilities and materials for learning disabled adults are needed.

Please continue to support adult education, adult basic and GED. There are many adults that need academic skills and GED's. Adult education is working-- help it continue to work.

C241--Each year the number of students with learning disabilities entering our programs has increased, yet the standards and goals of the programs have remained relatively constant. The range of disabilities within various classes is wide and impacts rather heavily upon the progress of the class groups with respect to program-achieved goals and objectives.

There is a great need for training and meaningful dialogue among teachers and administrators at the state and local levels regarding program considerations and adaptations for students with learning disabilities in addition to a working definition for "learning disabled"

C318--Students who have continued difficulties are given individual qualified tutors to work with them on a one to one basis.

C0756--There is an old adage about social work that says "It's not how, it's how many." I clearly understand and appreciate the need to reach as many people as possible but I believe quality instruction is often sacrificed for the sake of quantity. I don't know where the appropriate balance is, however.

C1257--#50--I'm not involved in the intake program so, therefore I do not have an answer to this question.

#53- I do not know about the other teachers, but I have learned to pay close attention now to all of my students and their reading habits.

C1258--I have only ever encountered two students in my classes who had some sort of learning difficulty. Our program coordinator arranged for tutoring and placement in a different class. I have no experience at all with students who have learning difficulties.

C1278--There is always a need for additional resources (people and information).

Appendix C-2

Comments Made by Administrators

C-079--Our students cannot pay for assessment, and we are not equipped to assess learning disabilities. We need to know where we can refer students for free assessment.

C-0693--This is a subject which needs a lot more study, especially at the grade and high school level (and even in pre-school). In Adult Ed. we are dealing with the results and not the cause. In my opinion, the focus should really be on the cause and elimination of the problem. While I do not advocate their methods, I strongly suspect this is a very minimal, if not non-existent, problem in Japan.

C041--An area that is difficult to get a handle on. Could definitely use more staff development in this area.

C137- Until now the specific problem of learning disabled adults has not been a priority, although some assistance has been given -- the focus of the instructors time has been on helping students who could quickly move to a GED level. ¶ Students with severe learning disabilities rarely stick with a program of improvement due to the length of time involved. The main goal of all students entering the ABE or GED program is to pass the GED. If this goal is not reached by the end of a six-month period the students with LD syndromes rarely return the following year. A change in ABE funding would be required to provide the type of program needed by LD students.

C0806--Our students are profoundly handicapped rather than learning disabled

C1271--Many of the students have been labeled (not necessarily "diagnosed") disabled due to trouble learning in school. Whether they do, in fact, have learning disabilities or not, they are still able to learn (and often at a fine pace) with a 1 to 1 tutors.

C1276--Notes with regard to items under #6: Many are difficult to answer because we deal indirectly with l.d. I feel our approach is helpful to l.d. people even though we don't classify people as such.

Appendix C-3

Comments made by Counselors

C-027--We have not scratched the surface of this problem!

C-037--If a person who signs up for GED classes is found to have a learning disability, s/he is referred to the Cambria County Literacy Council were individual tutors will work with the person until he or she is at a level wheres/he can keep up in a GED class.

C-042--It is difficult to assess how many of our students have been diagnosed or should have been diagnosed as learning disabled. I have many students who register for our program but never actually start the program. I suspect that many of these people would be LD. They have such a fear of failure, they'd rather not try than fail. ¶ Our program is not disguised to assess a learning disability. However, if I sense that one of our adults seems to be of average or above average intelligence and is experiencing a tremendous (or even some) frustration, I recommend testing through [OVR]. However, some of these adults can't be bothered. At this point, depending on their reading skills, I may solicit the help of the Mid-State Literacy Council to provide one-on-one tutoring of reading skills. If the adult's reading skills are too high for the Mid-State Council, then I find an untrained volunteer to provide one-on-one training for the GED. ¶ I think our current ABE/GED programs are completely off target in dealing with the learning disabled. From my experience, I have discovered there are days when I can read and days when reading is impossible. I know other LD people have the same problem. However, we sit them down in our GED classes by themselves and have them misread information for an hour or two at a time. ¶ ¶ I fail most multiple choice tests have to take. While in college, I compensated by taking classes where I was evaluated by a variety of means rather than just multiple choice tests. The GED is primarily a multiple choice test. While I do support giving the test untimed, if the adult is misreading the questions, it doesn't matter how much time s/he has.

C-083-- Our program deals with people with achievement levels 5-8 grade. Efforts to individualize as much as possible are made but group instruction is primarily done.

C-086-- Our program is a GED program which is aimed mainly at having students pass the GED test. In order to be successful with both the LD students and regular students within the number of hours funded under this program, I feel a separate program should be offered for LD students.

C-1063--It is difficult to obtain services for adults as they are over the mandatory education limit. In our area most Adult Ed. staff is part-time and thus must work at an additional job. Because Adult Ed. does not have a state certification, the administration tends to hire anyone, certified or not, to teach any subject.

C-1121--Counselor is my major responsibility. Teaching is secondary. I fill in when full-time teachers are absent.

C-1484--My area of counseling is job placement, not general or specific education. ¶ Same as those under "Teacher comments," plus... If we can identify the problem and apply solutions under education, we do not necessarily then need to work around them in job development and placement.

C-1484--Some method of identification is badly needed in this area. I feel that we must identify the problem first and foremost, then we can move on to the solutions. The only